

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing, re-examination and reconsideration of the subject matter identified in caption, as amended, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.111, and in light of the remarks which follow, are respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 2 and 3, and to further recite a difference between induction periods of strain-induced crystallization, as measured at the same temperature and the same shear strain rate, of 100 seconds or longer. This amendment is supported by the specification, for example, at page 7, lines 17-20. In addition, claims 2 and 3 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Furthermore, new claims 8 through 15 have been added. Claims 8-15 are supported by the specification, for example, from page 15, line 22 to page 16, line 3.

Upon entry of the Amendment, claims 1 and 4-15 will be all the claims pending in the application.

I. Drawings

The Examiner does not indicate that the drawings filed on May 17, 2005 have been accepted.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge such acceptance in the next PTO communication.

II. Response to Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph,

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for the reasons set forth in paragraph 2 of the Office Action.

Applicants submit that this rejection is moot because claim 2 has been canceled. Further, claim 1 as amended recites that points (a) and (b) are symmetric about the center point, and thus is not indefinite.

III. Response to Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)/103(a)

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,723,669 to Clark et al. for the reasons set forth at paragraph 5 of the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present claims are novel and patentable over Clark et al. for at least the following reasons.

Present claim 1 is directed to an extensible nonwoven fabric, wherein:

(i) the nonwoven fabric is a spunbonded nonwoven fabric;

(ii) the nonwoven fabric comprises a fiber comprising at least two olefin-based polymers, said at least two olefin-based polymers being of the same kind and having a difference between induction periods of strain-induced crystallization of 100 seconds or longer, and

(iii) the fiber is a conjugate fiber having a cross section with a center point and points (a) and (b), wherein points (a) and (b) are symmetric about the center point and the compositions at points (a) and (b) are the same.

As described in the specification, the presently claimed extensible nonwoven fabric is excellent in extensibility due to the above feature (iii) (page 3, lines 4-8 and page 7, lines 20-21), and has high productivity and strength due to the above feature (i) (page 17, lines 21-23).

Clark et al. discloses multicomponent spunbond fibers and webs made therefrom. Clark et al. describes the use of sheath-core configurations (col. 1, lines 11-20; col. 13, lines

28-50). Clark et al. further discloses that the individual components comprising the multicomponent fiber are usually different polymers (col. 1, lines 13-15). However, Clark et al. does not specifically disclose or suggest a multicomponent spunbond fiber wherein the individual components are of the same kind, as required in the present invention.

Moreover, Clark et al. does not disclose or suggest a fiber comprising at least two olefin-based polymers, wherein the at least two olefin-based polymers have a difference between induction periods of strain-induced crystallization of 100 seconds or longer.

It is asserted that Clark et al. teaches fibers comprising polymer components having different properties such as molecular weight distributions, polydispersity numbers, crystallinity degrees and melt flow rate, relying on the descriptions at col. 5, lines 19-24 and 63-67; and col. 7, lines 38-49.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above-identified portions of Clark et al. are related to the multicomponent meltblown fibers, but not to spunbond fibers.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that present claim 1 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by Clark et al. and thus the rejection should be withdrawn. In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 4-15 are novel and patentable over Clark et al. at least by virtue of their dependency.

IV. Conclusion

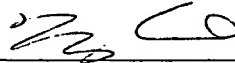
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order and such action is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (202) 452-7932 at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _____



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